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FRONTIER OUTRAGES IN AMERICA.

IN such American newspapers as reach England, we rarely see any account of the outrages on life and property which are of constant occurrence, not only on the south-western frontier of the states, which are tormented by Mexican marauders, but in parts of the western country, of what are considered to be of a settled and peaceful character. The 'press' is evidently not fond of noticing these things. Matters of a shocking nature are either suppressed or glossed over; for independently of personal reasons for keeping silence, there is an unwillingness to give a bad name to any particular district, lest it should scare away intending immigrants.

It having been the fortune of the present writer to visit a certain quarter down in the south-west, Kentucky and Missouri included, he can speak from experience of the dreadful ruffianism which occasionally breaks out, and the alarm that is spread among peace-loving citizens. For example, an incident took place at Kansas City, Missouri, a city of thirty thousand persons, in November or December 1872, which is worth mentioning. A 'fair' had been held there, corresponding to what we should call an exhibition, and this was held in extensive grounds and buildings near the city. At the close of the last afternoon, when it was judged that the chest holding the receipts from admissions would be at its fullest, and when there were several thousands of persons present, three men, armed, and with faces masked or blackened, rode up, and, with dreadful threats, seized the box, and galloped away. They got clear, but were disappointed in their hopes, for the chest had been recently cleared. Probably this outrage was noticed in some journals, but although I looked very attentively through a large number of newspaper 'exchanges,' I never saw a line in reference to it; my information coming from a private source.

On the 3d of September, 1871—it was on a Sunday afternoon, and a bright, beautiful afternoon too—I was reading in my office, which was my parlour and study as well, when loud voices

attracted my attention, and looking across the plaza or square, I saw a group of some twenty men and women all in agitation. A woman, shrieking angrily the while, was striking with a bottle at a very tall man, an American, whom I knew as one of our employés; the man easily avoided her; then the Mexicans—as all the rest were—began gesticulating wildly, and the tall man drew his pistol. The Mexicans were unarmed, were all exasperated about something, all more than half-drunk—for an election was impending, and 'free whisky' had been the order of the day—they pressed upon the white man, who retreated towards our corral, from which he was separated by a small river or creek. Finding that the Mexicans continued to throng upon him, although no violence had as yet been committed, he turned, drew his butcher-knife, and stabbed the nearest man right into his mouth, so that the carotid artery was divided, and the man died in a few minutes. Enraged at this, some heavy stones were thrown at him by the Mexicans, and he was knocked down senseless, and would have been killed, but that, hearing the outcry, two of his companions rushed from the corral—which is something like a stable and farm-yard in one—to his assistance. The first of these knelt down, and wonderfully escaping a whole shower of stones thrown at him, fired all six barrels of his revolver, shooting two Mexicans, and giving time for other white men to come up; so that his friend was rescued with a shattered skull and badly bruised ribs. He and a wounded Mexican were laid in a shed belonging to the tavern here, for we had no hospital, nor had we half-a-dozen private houses; while the slaughtered man was carried by two Mexicans across the plaza. One of these had drawn the murdered man's arms over his own shoulders, and held by the hands in front; the other, a few feet in the rear, held his ankles; and so, with no more ceremony than would be shewn to a dead sheep, I saw him taken away. For want of evidence, perhaps, or for want of a place in which to keep him, the two men whom I have described as coming from the corral were allowed to take their wounded friend into the mountains with them.

The events just detailed led to others still more serious, and deranged our neighbourhood terribly. It was the writer's duty to send at intervals—which, being regular, were of course well known—a large sum to a lonely spot some twenty miles up among the hills; and about a month after the scene just described, the clerk came for the 'currency' as usual. It was given to him; and he started off on horseback with a companion, and had ridden about four miles, when he was met in the cañon—which, when pronounced 'canyon,' means a valley or gorge between mountains—by a friendly driver, who warned him that 'Taylor and Coal-oil Jemmy' were waiting to rob him, and that he would infallibly be stopped. So he sent the notes back by his informant, and rode on, until, as they entered a part of the cañon where the huge mountain-sides came closer, and the fragments of rock scattered at their bases were larger, a voice shouted 'Stop!' and two men with levelled pistols suddenly confronted them. Of course the riders obeyed the imperative command; and one of the men came forward and searched them, but without finding the expected booty; and disdaining to take the few dollars the travellers had with them, allowed them to pass, vociferously declaring that they wanted the Company's money, and the Company's money they would have. They spoke to the clerk by name, and he knew them; there was no disguise at all. These were the two men I have described as coming from our corral to the assistance of their wounded companion.

They were named Taylor and Buckner. Taylor stood six feet five inches high, and I knew him, not only from his great height, but from the fact that he always followed his work—he was a teamster—even in the town, with a loaded revolver on his hip, and a huge straight knife in his belt. Buckner, who was called 'Coal-oil Jemmy,' from his having been employed to dig for coal-oil, was a little man, and of respectable extraction. It was said that his father was, and is, a physician of good standing in the States, and that Jemmy was unable to go home, from a bloody deed he had done when a boy. He was not twenty years of age at his death, so that one can believe he began early.

Much excitement and some consternation was felt on finding that Taylor and Buckner had taken up the business of 'road-agents,' and our people were several times stopped, but owing to the precautions taken, we never lost any money; horses and mules, however, they stole at pleasure. In about a fortnight they robbed the mail, and of a government parcel too, containing about five hundred dollars of inland revenue money. In England, we can all fancy what a stir and excitement there would have been over this, and how police and soldiers would have been crowded into the district; but nothing whatever was done here—the apathy or timidity of the government in such matters is extraordinary to strangers. At this time no one went out alone, or unarmed; the mails refused to carry money parcels; the post-office was 'out' of forms for registering letters for some months; we had no bank in the town, no money-order office; and so in this remote district we were in great straits, while the bravado of these men increased to such a pitch that one night they rode through our town. They boasted, too, that they

had many confederates among ourselves, and we had only too good reason for believing this to be true. Several parties went out to look for them; but the huge hills and table-lands which lead up to, and swell into mountains as high as Mont Blanc, and which cover great part of the country, well wooded, with millions of broken rocks, and thousands of ravines, would have hidden an army.

One party reached the camp, as a rude resting-place was called, about ten o'clock at night, and sent a Mexican in, dismounted, to see if any strangers were there. The armed party waited for an hour and a half the return of the scout, and the night having set in intensely cold, they were half-frozen by the time he came back with the intelligence that there were certainly two strangers in the camp, and that he believed them to be the robbers. They all dismounted, and moved carefully in, and coming upon a wagon in the dark, which they knew to be near the dwellings, some of the party crept under it, to watch for any passer-by. One of the party coming up to the wagon, leant against the rear of the vehicle—which is a narrow, low affair, very different from our English wagons; and by the hind-wheel, plainly visible against the dark sky, leant another man, who presently moved away. This man was Taylor; but the other, being a stranger to him, did not like to fire, for fear of hurting an ally. Although the thieves could not hear or see the party, yet they were on the alert, for they guessed that they were 'wanted.' They had intended to steal horses, but they did not like to enter the corral while they thought they were hunted, and were about to slink off when the party came in. For a moment the thieves were visible, and they were fired at by those under the wagon, and by others. One of the best shots in existence fired both barrels of his gun full at Buckner; three bullets passed through his coat, another struck the butt of his pistol, and broke it; but, by some wonderful fortune, the man was not hurt. In another moment they had disappeared in the darkness; but their retreat was in a great measure cut off. A river was behind them; the country round was open and bare, so they were in a bad plight. They forced their way into the log-cabin, and here they found one of the stock-herders; him they seized and kept in with them, the hunters being afraid to fire lest they should kill the man. At last, becoming desperate, the robbers threw open the door, and with a pistol at the herder's head, compelled him to walk before them. It was so dark now that they could not be distinguished one from the other, and the voice of the stockman was loudly raised, begging the party not to fire, or they would hit him. Then the three disappeared, and the chase was over for the night. The highwaymen, who were dreadfully exhausted, forced the herder to go with them until they reached the banks of a small stream, some three miles from the spot where these notes were written; Coal-oil Jemmy, who was much the bloodier-minded of the twain, manifested a great desire to shoot the prisoner, but Taylor persuaded him from his design. At last they could go no farther, and soon after sunrise, threw themselves down, when Jemmy fell asleep. The prisoner finding that Taylor only was awake, made an appeal to be allowed to escape, and Taylor told him that if he wanted to go, he had better do so, before Jemmy awoke. The man needed no

second bidding, but was off, and came into our town the same day.

All this time the injured companion of the highwaymen, he who was hurt in the fight with the Mexicans, was lying, unable to move, in a hut in the mountains, some fourteen miles from our town, and it was generally believed that a reluctance to leave him was the cause of these men playing such a dangerous game, as constantly robbing in the same district must inevitably be.

Just about this period, however, one or two things occurred which indicated that the thieves meant a change, for they committed several very bold robberies, outdoing all their previous daring. For instance, they again robbed the mail; but, as before, not the slightest notice was taken of the incident by the government; and they sent into the town various messages threatening fire and murder. They had been joined by a third man, a half-breed, but although an accomplice, he feared they would kill him, and so deserted. Another thing which betokened a change was the removal of the wounded man to a military hospital some fifty miles on the other side of our settlement. He was brought through the town in a wagon, and being too ill to leave the vehicle, was fed in it. Neither Taylor nor Jemmy was with him, but there were a good many open eyes upon the wounded murderer, and these noted that the wagon was driven by a notorious associate and spy of the gang. The man was apparently allowed to go in peace, yet full details and warnings were sent to the authorities, and it was known he would find it difficult to leave the hospital when cured, and that any one visiting him would be closely watched. It was believed that the robbers would change the venue, as the lawyers say, for a time, in order to be near their disabled comrade; and divers plans, based on this expectation, were again laid for their capture, and much loud talk and prophecy of failure or success was indulged in.

There was in progress, however, a scheme which was kept very quiet, but which was fraught with more danger to the highwaymen than any of these loudly trumpeted attempts. It was not only kept quiet in itself, but by large expeditions riding out forty or fifty miles ostensibly to catch the thieves, whereby suspicion was diverted from the really dangerous quarter. A large reward—two thousand dollars—was offered to whoever would bring them in; every one knew what sort of bringing in was meant, and two men secretly undertook the task. These had once been very friendly with Taylor and Buckner, but some grievance had led to a separation; their names were Joe M'Curdy and John Stuart. They knew where to find the highwaymen, relative to whom popular instinct had not erred; they had gone south, to join a most notorious horse-stealer, and to be near their injured friend. Accordingly, M'Curdy wrote to them, making an appointment to meet them, and hinting at an easy scheme of great profit. This feigned scheme, the writer may be excused for observing, included the sacking of a certain large safe in his private care; no burglary could open or remove it without some hours of hard work, while so strange was its machinery, that even the possession of the key would scarcely enable a stranger to open it. It was supposed, however, that a revolver held to the custodian's head might facilitate matters.

The two conspirators set off on their long, lonely

ride over the mountain roads and bare plains of New Mexico, until they arrived at the Turkey Mountains, in a gorge of which was their rendezvous. Now, be it observed that no two men ever undertook a more hazardous adventure than this; they were but two to two, and their very going out might easily generate suspicion in the minds of men who knew that a heavy price was set upon their heads; men who were armed to the teeth, and were bloodshedders and desperadoes by trade. They had some doubt, too, as to whether the thieves would keep the appointment at all; but they did so, and their new allies found themselves very well received. Taylor, at any rate, was glad to see them, but Coal-oil Jemmy was not so easily deceived, and shewed less pleasure than his associate, who, indeed, made them so welcome, especially M'Curdy, whom he considered as his chief friend, that the latter said, when he got a chance of exchanging a few hurried words with Stuart: 'I can't shoot Taylor. You must take him.' For it was arranged between them that they should kill the two men at the first fair chance, all idea of capturing them alive being abandoned; and it was also arranged that M'Curdy should take the lead, and on his indicating by a sign or a look that the time was come, Stuart was to fire, whatever his own opinion might be. It was a desperate job, and they felt it to be so, as they sat talking by the low fire on the hillside in the cañon. The mountains are low, and heavily wooded there, and in some broken ground, well sheltered by trees, the four had built their fire and cooked their supper. Buckner was on his guard. He never parted from his gun even while he ate, and a certain surliness in his manner alarmed M'Curdy, who dreaded lest he might turn suspicious in earnest, or that he himself might incautiously drop a word to arouse him. In such a case, he knew Jemmy would kill him at once, and as the night wore on, he felt sure nothing would throw his dangerous host off his guard, and that if the deed were to be done at all, it must be done quickly, and at all hazards.

Taylor threw his huge form on the ground, by the fire, which had burnt very low, consisting only of great red logs now; and resting his elbow on the ground, and his head upon his hand, watched the embers quietly, with his gun lying about a couple of yards from him, and seemed as if he would go to sleep. Not so Buckner; with his loaded gun thrown into the hollow of his arm, he refused Taylor's advice to get a little sleep before morning, and his eyes watched every shadow, and his ears listened to every sound. They had agreed to move at dead of night, and it was now about ten o'clock; they were to steal a fine horse from a neighbouring rancho—for Taylor was on foot—and M'Curdy kept talking about this and their further schemes. He sat talking to Jemmy, looking him full in the face the while, by the light of the fire, his right hand resting with apparent carelessness on his hip. There hung his revolver, and he knew that if he openly moved towards it, his jealous companion would shoot him. He gradually, with his eyes still on Jemmy's face, worked his hand back until he could touch the butt of his pistol. He then looked at Stuart, who, as anxious as himself, was waiting the signal: M'Curdy slightly raised his eyebrows, Stuart did the same, and then the latter shifted his position to a little in the rear of Taylor. M'Curdy felt the critical

moment had come, and that, if his companion's heart failed him, or there was the slightest wavering in their aim, they were dead men. There was no other chance, however; and while he was yet talking, he swiftly jerked his revolver from its holster, high in the air, after the western mode, and as it came down fired straight into his listener's face: a sound like an echo came from behind; it was Stuart's pistol. M'Curdy's ball crashed right through the centre of Buckner's forehead; the robber had ejaculated 'Oh!' as he saw the movement of M'Curdy's arm; then he was struck. Although mortally wounded, he instinctively tried to draw his revolver, and partly succeeded, when M'Curdy shot him again, just as another bullet from behind killed Taylor. The latter was lying as explained, resting on his elbow, between Stuart and the firelight, and Stuart, firing at a distance of twelve feet, shot him in the back of the neck; the wounded giant fell, but struggled to reach his gun, when a second shot just above the other killed him. Thus died two real highway robbers of our own day.

It may easily be guessed what commotion was excited in our town when the news was first brought in; what rejoicing, and what incredulity too, were there; but on the next day but one, the news became a certainty; for then the bodies of the robbers, unwashed, their heads and faces incrustated with blood, and clad in the clothes in which they had been killed, were brought there in a wagon, as evidence that their captors had done their work. I paid instantly the two thousand dollars; and the spot where the dead men lay became at once the centre of attraction. They were photographed, being propped up against a wall, to give them as life-like an appearance as possible; but anything more ghastly than the photo, it would be difficult to imagine. M'Curdy and Stuart, as a natural consequence, determined to leave the country, for the dead men had many friends, who did not exactly approve, it is possible, of the line of living they had struck out, but approved still less of the means taken to stop them, and were very likely to express their disapprobation by means of a revolver, on the first opportunity.

Having related the career of these men, because it began and ended within my own observation, I will allude very briefly to a still more terrible gang which infested our neighbourhood, very soon after Taylor and Jemmy were killed. A man named Wilson had fled from Texas, on account of a murder he had committed there, and with several of his companions was behaving in a riotous manner in a saloon at the town of Trinidad, which lies on the border of Colorado, so the sheriff was sent for to quell the disturbance. This officer was a Mexican, by name Juan Tafaya; and him they murdered, shooting him down at once, and then they rode off. Wilson, the actual murderer, was joined by a couple of men, former friends and associates of M'Curdy and Stuart; these recruits were named Sweeney and Abbott, and for months they may almost be said to have held our town in a state of siege. They began by stealing some valuable mules, and nine men were sent after them; but they intrenched themselves in a hut on the mountains, shot two of their pursuers dead on the spot—and two very quiet, respectable men these were, well known to my-

self, as indeed were the murderers—and got safely away. They robbed in every direction, murdered out of pure wantonness, and sent by the driver of the coach repeated messages of the most blood-thirsty character. Our doctor had in some way incurred their ill-will, and as it may easily be supposed that in such a district his patients would be widely scattered, he visited them at peril of his life, once being chased for miles, and always having a companion with him, and a sixteen-shot rifle in the chaise. The writer hereof, too, was a favourite object for their threats, and most of their messages included one to him; various precautions were accordingly taken, and more than once he has had to sit up in expectation of an attack.

These wretches went away safely at last; it was supposed they had gone to a different part of Texas, but no one seemed to know positively. All I know is that the government never made the slightest effort to arrest them. To an English reader, these things are well-nigh incredible, and he will find no such experiences in any work on emigration, but they are true, nevertheless. Very often the local papers do not allude to these outrages at all, or when they do, try to present them in a jocular manner, as if it really was, after all, more funny than serious. Some of the reasons for so glossing over these acts of violence have been already adverted to, the chief reason of all being a terror to speak out, which any one can appreciate. We are also to bear in mind that in many quarters, with a sparse population, the law is comparatively powerless, a circumstance which, on occasions, leads to lynching the desperados who prey on society. When one sees the scandalous shirking of law and justice in some of the old eastern states, little wonder is there that in the southern and western there should be next thing to no law at all.

A CAVALIER FAMILY.

THE existence of a peculiarly valuable addition to the history of the seventeenth century, has recently been made known to the Historical Commissioners, and the manuscript which embodies it has been placed at their service by the Dominican Friars at Woodchester, near Stroud, in whose library it has been long preserved. The title of this interesting record is *Sir Edward Southcot's Memoirs*, and the contents are two letters addressed to Philip Southcote by his 'loving father, E. S.,' who proposes at the beginning of the first letter to write a few particulars of the lives of his ancestors, 'for your amusement when you are under your tent.' A curious piece of family biography is thus unfolded, an abbreviated version of which will not, we think, prove unattractive to our readers.

Walter, Lord Aston, grandfather to the writer of this narrative, married the Lady Mary Weston. His father was many years ambassador in Spain. The estate of Standon coming to him through his wife, a descendant of the great Sir Ralph Sadler, he removed there, and began a most magnificent way of living. He had a hundred-and-one persons in his family. The grandson, his chronicler, resided with him for three or four months every summer from the sixth until the fourteenth year of his age. He tells us that the table was served with three courses, each of twenty dishes; and these were brought up by twenty men, who stamped like thunder up the great stairs at every course.

My lord had four servants behind his own chair. He was very curious in his wine, but first of all drank at one draught a whole quart of malt drink, or wine-and-water, as a remedy, he considered, for his various disorders. At all the inns where he lodged, in travelling, they kept a quart glass called my Lord Aston's glass; one of them was seen, many years after his death, at the Altar-stone at Banbury. The servants all dined together in the hall; and what was left was thrown into a tub, which two men took on their shoulders to the court-gate, where, every day, forty or fifty poor people were served with it. When my lord did not go hawking in the afternoon, he always played at ombre with his two sons for an hour, and at four o'clock returned to a covered seat in his vineyard. There he sat alone, and none durst approach him. At five o'clock, his chariot, with a pair of his six gray Flanders mares, took him a 'trole' about the park for five or six miles. The chariot was made so narrow that none could sit by him. He returned at seven, and by eight would be in bed. He always lay in bed without pillow, bolster, or nightcap. Winter and summer, he rose at four, and entertained himself with books till it was time to go hunting, or hawking at wild-ducks. He would never allow any but hunted venison at his table. Every day but Sunday, one buck at least was killed, but most commonly a brace. He never made or returned any visit, the court and address of that county being made to him.

When this mighty man died, his corpse was attended from Tixall to Stafford by upwards of a thousand persons. Sir John Southcote, the father of our narrator, married the eldest daughter of Lord Aston; and a little history of him is next recorded. Soon after he returned from his studies beyond the sea, the Civil War broke out. He obtained leave from his father and grandfather to volunteer for the king, but this was granted very unwillingly, as he was the only heir of the family, there being but one son (himself) and three daughters. The eldest of these, Mary, was a Benedictine nun at Ghent, who died at the age of eighty. The second daughter, Dorothy, 'a very handsome woman,' married Colonel Stanford, of Perry Hall, in Staffordshire, one of the leading beaux of the time. Katherine, the third, made a 'good match,' at the age of thirty-two, with Sir John Smith, of Crabbitt, in Sussex, a widower sixty years old, with twelve hundred a year.

The first adventure in which Sir John Southcote was engaged was while serving in a reserve corps. The enemy observing this body of nearly a thousand men, fired at them with cannon, which killed several of their men and horses. He found it very unpleasant to stand still in cold blood to be thus shot at in sight of the two armies, which were now closely engaged; but this was their fate for nearly an hour. By that time the king's army had forced its way through the enemy and 'nailed up' the cannon. As Oliver's troops were beginning to give way, the reserves were called up to pursue. This was the first occasion upon which Sir John made use of his little battle-axe, a weapon carried by all the king's troops. It hung to the wrist by a ribbon, and did not hinder the use of the pistol or sword. It was a 'dead-doing thing,' and like the mason's 'laithing-hammer,' had a sharp little axe on one side, and a hammer on the other. The hammer was most generally preferred. It was

effective in felling the enemy to the ground 'with one rap upon their round heads.' This was a new invention. The enemy in reprisal first discharged their muskets, and then fought with the butt-end. This did great execution, but spoiled the firearms, by breaking the stock and bending the barrel. The army being at no great distance from Perry Hall, our hero went thither to see his brother and sister Stanford. He rode up the staircase, and did not dismount till he reached the table where they were sitting at supper. They were much pleased with his frolic, and glad to see him. During the course of the next day, the rebels plundered Tixall House, Lord Aston's, his lordship being away as a commander in Lichfield Close. There was no one left in the house but Lady Aston and her daughter, Sir John's future wife, then but five years old. The Parliamentary officer ordered that Lady Aston should not be disturbed in her chamber; but the rest of the place was totally plundered. Her ladyship had to beg a little new milk of a neighbour, and a skillet to boil it in; that was all the breakfast, dinner, and supper which they had that day.

After a good deal of skirmishing, Sir John Southcote figured in the main body of the army in the first fight at Newbury. There he took prisoner Captain Hall, who commanded what was called Cromwell's own troop; and eight or ten days afterwards, we find that he accepted as Hall's ransom a fine managed horse, a suit of armour, a diamond ring, and a promise to the effect, that if he, in his turn, were made prisoner, he should be immediately released without exchange. The king, hearing of this exploit, made the chief performer of it a knight, but expressed some little dissatisfaction that so marked a man as Captain Hall should have been released without the exchange of a prisoner of equal rank. Southcote's friends remarked, in his defence, that as he ventured his life without receiving any pay, either for himself or his retainers, it was reasonable that he should do as he pleased with his prisoners. Sir John was present at the second battle of Newbury; and shortly afterwards took part in the siege of Oxford, into which city he was ordered to enter before it was entirely surrounded. Exceedingly anxious now was he to serve under Prince Rupert, whom he described as the greatest beau as well as the greatest hero in the royal army. The prince's method of fighting was, to charge right through the enemy, and then to fall upon their rear, slaughtering them with scarcely any opposition. One very cold morning he took a very fine laced handkerchief out of his pocket, and tied it about his neck; hence originated the habit of wearing laced cravats. A little black dog always followed him into the field, 'which the Roundheads fancied was the Evil One, and took it very ill that he would set himself against them.' In the fatal battle of Naseby, the prince forced his way through the body of horse that opposed him, and 'nailed up' the enemy's cannon; but, meanwhile, the main body of the rebels' horse broke in upon the foot of the king's army, and made a fearful carnage, leaving upwards of twenty thousand dead, wounded, and prisoners. The writer of this narrative afterwards was shewn the windmill in which the king sat to see the battle, and the hawthorn bush where Cromwell placed himself for the like purpose. There was

a little valley in which the foot were so hemmed that there was no possibility of flight. After this battle the king appeared no more in the field. Sir John Southcote returned home, and then travelled into Italy for a year. He next spent a good deal of his time in London, where he appears to have got on friendly terms with Cromwell's daughter, 'Lady Elizabeth Cleopol'; and it is recorded that on one occasion, being in Paris, he received letters from her, asking him to buy her two damask beds, one with gold, the other with silver fringes, and also very many yards of the richest gold and silver stuffs for her own wearing.

The narrative now details the particulars of the marriage of Sir John's sister, the death of his mother in London, and her burial in St Clement's Church in the Strand, and the intended second marriage of his father with 'an ancient maid of about fifty'; and lastly, his own marriage with Lord Aston's daughter. During his courtship, when on his journey to visit the lady at Kingston-on-Thames, he was arrested by order of Cromwell, upon some accusation or other, and conveyed to Lambeth House, at that time a prison for the cavaliers. Whereupon Sir John sent a letter to Lady Elizabeth Claypole, 'who went to her father in a huff', and explained the matter. A discharge was immediately sent, along with a complimentary excuse.

The writer, having thus sketched the histories of his grandfather and father, proceeds to set down his own reminiscences. These begin with the Great Plague, which occurred when he was five years old. Next summer he heard of the fire at London, he then being at Enfield with his aunt Stanford, who had retired from London on account of the plague. As soon as it was dark, the fire was plainly visible. He heard the people as they passed along call out 'Forty pounds for a cart,' 'Any money for a cart,' to carry their goods. The day after, he returned to Stanford; and as he went through London, he observed the fire to be still burning. One of his father's servants, a Frenchman, being heard to speak broken English, was seized upon by a constable and watchman; but Sir John Southcote explained who he was, and where he lived; and having given them half-a-crown for drink, these guardians of public order were content to let the man go.

When Sir Edward was grown up, he kept a pack of hounds, while his father diverted himself with a goshawk for pheasants. The disturbance of the country caused by Titus Oates's plot made the family endure many persecutions. For his religion, his father was convicted at the county sessions to pay twenty pounds a month as well as two-thirds of his estate, which soon ran up to nine hundred pounds. For want of prompt payment, he had four bailiffs for five weeks in his house, who seized all the household goods and the plough-horses of the tenants. However, at last he was relieved from these annoyances through the influence of a near and very good neighbour, and afterwards lived pretty quietly.

Various family details follow: the death of his father and mother, the former at Drayton, the latter in St James's Street, London; Sir Edward's marriage at Mr Corker's Chapel in the Savoy, by Bishop Ellia. He lived at Mitham, and then at Witham, kept five or six horses for his coach, and

four or five for the saddle, had constantly five dishes at a course, and three courses. He had also a dairy of ten cows, and the tallow from the beef and mutton was enough to supply the house with candles all the year round. He continued thus for the last years of James II's reign. Then came the Revolution. Ever since, he writes, has he lived in the iron age of double taxes, the expenses of which have amounted 'to something above L5000, of what your brother and I have paid. And had there been no land-tax at all, as in all other reigns before King William's, he and I might have had at this day L10,000 in our pockets.' Sir Edward concludes his Memoirs with a prayer that his son will take this small labour in good part from his loving father.

A SNAKE SPIRIT.

ONE morning, when I went into the fields after breakfast to see how the hands were getting on among the sugar-cane, one of them, a great hulking Kaffir, who had been nearly two years with me, came up and asked leave to go to his kraal. They were all obliged to do this, not being free labourers, but refugees from the neighbouring kingdom of Zululand; and as the colony was already overstocked, the law obliged them to work for three years at lower wages than their fellows, and did not allow them to go away even for a day without their master's permission.

I was very busy at the time, preparing for the crushing season, and told him that it was out of the question, asking at the same time why he wanted to go. The answer was, his ancestral spirit had appeared to him and told him to go. Feeling rather curious, I asked him to tell me all about it; and he related the following story, which I will give in his own words.

'Two nights ago, on coming home from work at dusk, I saw a green snake on the fence that surrounds our huts; on going up to it, I saw by the markings that it was one of those that the old men had told me contained our ancestral spirits. Wishing to please it, for fear they might hurt me, I went into my own hut, and took some thick milk and maize-beer, and some of the meat of that ox that died a few days ago, and was in the act of coming out, when it met me. Although it is not lucky to go backwards through one's doorway, I was obliged to do so, to get out of it. It came into the centre of the hut, and raised itself on its tail, and looked at me. I was very much frightened; perhaps it was not an ancestral spirit at all, and might bite; but to make sure, I put down the food close to it, and shouted out all the praises and great names which belong to our family. By and by, it lowered itself, and without looking at, or taking any notice of, my offering, went out.

'I was glad it had done so, but did not think much more about it; and after having my supper, and smoking wild hemp for an hour with the other men, I went to sleep. It must have been a long time after that I had a dream, for when I awoke the fire was out: I saw my father, who, you

know, was killed in the battle of the Princes, standing and looking angrily at me. I saluted him. He did not answer, nor speak for a long time, but at last said: "What are you doing here among the whites, when your father's house is being destroyed? Get up early, and go." I tried to say something, but could not, and in the effort awoke. The moonlight was streaming in through the wicker-door, and sitting full in it was my ancestral spirit-snake, motionless, and looking at me as it had done before; and then I knew I had in truth seen my father.

'I did not sleep much more that night, indeed it was near dawn; and as soon as Umpondo' (the European overseer) 'was up, I asked leave to go; but he would not let me, and I was afraid of the magistrate if I went in spite of him, so I worked as usual all day. Some of the men, whom I told about it, said: "You are sure to die; the spirits are angry." In the evening, when I entered my hut, there was the green snake again, lying in the same place, only this time it never moved or noticed my entrance. I was glad to get out quickly and sit in the big hut with the other men; and when I returned to sleep, it had disappeared.

'This night, my father appeared again, and at the same time too, for I had heard the cocks crowing when I awoke previously, and I heard them immediately afterwards this morning.

'He looked ten times more cross, just as he used to when his wives bothered him, and only spoke once to say: "Get up early and go." I awoke immediately; and there, in the very spot he had been standing, was the green snake. I knew it understood me, so I said I would go whatever happened; and that if you would not let me, I should run away. As soon as I had finished, it turned round, and left the hut. Now, may I go?'

I was rather puzzled what to say; the man was evidently speaking in good faith, and if I kept him, he would only half-work; but then I reflected that his kraal was beyond the boundaries of the colony, where he would be certainly killed if found, and I could not afford to lose so good a labourer, besides, I was really very short-handed, and so I told him; and he walked away looking very grand and sulky. Next morning, he had absconded, and I did not think it worth while to send the police after him, but merely reported it as a case of desertion to the magistrate, never expecting to hear anything more of him.

A week after, on coming outside at daylight, who should I find but Jack squatting under the verandah post, accompanied by two native girls and an old woman, carrying something on her back tied up in a greasy goatskin, which, on inspection, proved to be two little naked black babies.

'Hollo, Jack, where have you turned up from?'

'From Zululand, sir.'

'And who are all these?'

'My mother and sisters.'

It was evident something had been wrong at

home, and there was the result; but I was anything but angry at seeing Master Jack again, especially as I was rather in want of a girl to help in the house, for my own mother was getting old, and not quite up to the work, though she would not admit it. On looking more closely at him, I noticed he seemed dreadfully thin, and asked when he had had food last.

'Three days ago, sir,' was the answer.

'Well, go down to the huts, and get something at once. You can apply to the magistrate and get the girls registered afterwards, and when I have heard your story.'

When he came back again, having evidently amply made up for his long fast, I made him sit down and take up his story where he had left off.

'When you said I mustn't go, sir, I made up my mind that if I saw my father again, I would run away. That evening, everything happened that had occurred on the previous nights. The snake was there when I came home, and my father appeared as before, only adding to the former sentence of "Get up early and go," the words: "It is the last time." When I awoke and found his snake opposite me, I said: "I am off;" but it did not move, nor would it until I had taken my spears and sticks, put on my leopard-skin dress with the wild-cats' tails, and was ready to start, when it glided out before me. I made straight for the Tugela' (the boundary river), 'which I reached in the afternoon, but waited till it was dark to cross. It wasn't pleasant swimming over the hole where I had seen so many of our men drown in the great battle, and the alligators quarrelling for them, but I was afraid to ask for the white man's boat, as I had got no pass.

'When I reached the other side, I made direct for our kraal, walking the whole night; but when it dawned, I was still some distance off, and did not dare to go on, for fear of being seen; so I crept into a clump of bush, and lay there all day. I saw several people pass—some that I knew—and just at dusk a company of soldiers came up and sat down under the bush where I was. I soon learned from their talk that they had been sent to destroy some village for sorcery: you know what that means—killing every living thing, men, women, and children, even cats and dogs; sparing nothing. They were going to remain about here, some said under this very bush, until near dawn, and then surround the sleeping kraal. Luckily for me, they saw a better-looking clump a few hundred yards away; and all the younger men were sent to light fires, and make it as comfortable as possible, while their seniors sat and talked. Judge of my feelings when I heard that it was my own home they were going to; and my uncle, now head of the kraal, who was accused of sorcery! Not that I cared much about him: he was a bad man, and had got all my cattle as a reward for fighting on the other side; but my mothers and sisters were there also. I lay quite still, long after the supper star had come out, and the soldiers had all gone to their fires, thinking what I should do. It is so hard to escape when everybody is on the look-out for you, and all the fords into the colony are guarded. After a time, I got up and stole away. It was not necessary to crawl or take much care, for the bright firelight in which the men were sitting prevented their seeing anything outside of its glare. The great danger was at home. If the dogs heard or smelt me, I

knew they would rouse everybody, and then all would be lost. At last, I got close outside the kraal-fence opposite our hut, where my own mother and sisters slept; and I lay and listened. Was my uncle in it or not? Of course all my mothers were his wives now. The people were not all asleep, though some were, and all the hut-doors were fastened; but I could hear them talking in our hut, women's voices, and at last I distinguished my sister's. You know Umxakazi' (another refugee who had come to me about the same time he had). 'Well, he used to be her lover, and often came at night, and called her out by imitating the *titi-hoya* plover when it is disturbed. I knew all about it, though I always pretended not to hear him, and now I made the same signal. Once; then a long interval, during which I could not hear my sister speaking again. Had she fallen asleep? I repeated it; and after a few minutes' listening the voice said: "Mother, did you put that bundle of sticks away that you fetched this afternoon? You know how old Umteveva steals." "No, I didn't, my child." "Then I'll go and do it," and I heard her unbarring the door, and knew she had recognised the call. She came out, and walking to the private entrance through the kraal-fence, stood still. I croaked like a frog, and then she took down the blocks of wood which fastened it, and came on until she saw me, and said in a low tone: "Umxakazi?" I answered: "No, it's me, Umkungu. Who is in the hut?" "No one but ourselves. Where have you come from?" "Go back and tell our mother I am here. I have come from the colony on important business; and take care you don't wake any one." She turned back, and I followed to the door of the hut, and, when I made out that they understood who it was, went in. In a whisper I told them all that had happened; and we consulted what was best to be done. It would certainly be quite impossible to get clear off that night, and probably not easy the next one, with the country all disturbed. By this time, sentinels had no doubt been placed all around; and it was too dangerous to attempt to get through their circle; but I knew a place on the river, about a quarter of a mile off, where I did not think we could be easily discovered, and which I thought we might reach. They told me my two other mothers were away helping to make beer at a neighbouring kraal, and I had little compunction in leaving the others to their fate, particularly as to disturb them was to prevent our own escape. I got them to hunt up every bit of food there was; and after making a good meal, for I was very hungry, tied the remainder up. Then the women took their blankets, and we went out, going down to the river by the path used to fetch water, for I felt certain our footsteps would not be noticed there. Then we waded up the stream, avoiding the deep places, for we knew every yard of it, until we reached the spot I thought would do to hide in. We had first to cross a hole taking us over our heads. The opposite bank was high and perpendicular, and covered with small thick bushes, without room, apparently, for a fly to hide in; but in one place the water, when high, had washed out a lump of light soil between two large rocks, and the bushes quite concealed it. We crawled in: there was just room for us all; and there we crouched the whole night, not daring to move.

'I was half-dozing, and daylight had just broken, when we heard the dogs at the kraal barking

furiously; in a minute more the war-cry sounded clear through the still morning, and then a tremendous row, dogs barking, howling as they were speared, women and children screaming amidst shouts of: "Come out, you witches;" "Set fire to the huts;" "Stick him;" and now and then the terrible "Ngahla!" (said by a man when he stabs another, literally 'I eat'). 'I could feel my mother shuddering as she cowered down beside me; but our attention was soon called away. A lot of men appeared running at full speed on the opposite bank. I recognised my uncle; he was a little in front of his pursuers, who delayed themselves by ineffectually hurling their spears. One, however, running in a slanting direction, was trying to cut him off, and as my uncle passed within twenty yards of him, he pulled up, and poising his assegai for a second, sent it quivering into the wretched man's body. He fell on the spot; and the others coming up, finished him on the ground, amidst cries of "Ngahla." I thought we at anyrate were to be left in peace; but I suppose they must have heard at the neighbouring kraals that my mother and sister had escaped; and knowing from their sentinels that we must be somewhere within their lines, they set to work to beat every bush or hollow capable of concealing a human being. Once, two of them came down to the water, but on reaching the deep place opposite our hiding-place, and seeing how bare the stunted bushes under which we were seemed to be, they skirted along the shallow and passed on. In half an hour one of them came back, got out of the water, and walked along the bank above us and looking down. Something must have aroused his suspicions, perhaps some involuntary movement, for he stopped and watched the place, and then running down, got into the river, and came along it, plunging his spear through the bushes. I saw we should be discovered, and quietly rose and slipped into the water till only my head was out, half-concealed by a projecting branch. As he came abreast of me, swimming, for it was very deep, I thought it would be all right; he was too much engaged treading water to examine the bank very closely; but unluckily one of those babies made a little squall, and I saw by his face he had heard it. He half-turned in the stream. I had a heavy knobkenie in one hand, and making a spring, struck him on the head with it, and throwing my body on his, pressed him down. He must have been half-stunned by the blow, for I got him to the bottom, and catching hold of a root with one hand, wrenched his spear from him with the other; and in a second more that danger had passed away. I came up again as quietly as possible, and with a look round to see no one was in sight, got back to my old shelter.

'There is not much more to tell. They kept prowling about till afternoon, when we could hear them driving the cattle off; but we were afraid to move that night, though I went back to the kraal to see if anything had escaped. You would not care to hear what I did see. We lay there all the next day, starving, for we had not brought much food with us, and then started next night. We dared not make for the lower fords, which were sure to be watched, and so lay in a bush all the following day. I was dead-tired, for I had carried those two babies most of the way. My sisters ought to have done it, but one has been sick, and the other is lame. We got to the upper ford in

the middle of last night, and here before daylight this morning.' And so he finished his story, ending by shouting out praises and thanksgivings to his ancestral spirit, who had saved his mother and sisters.

NINETY YEARS AGO.

IN the year 1782, Charles P. Moritz, a Prussian clergyman, spent a two months' holiday in England. A plain, sensible man, well up in English, a capital walker, a shrewd observer, he went out and about making the very best use of his time; and recorded all he saw and heard, enjoyed and suffered, in a series of letters written almost from day to day, for the amusement and edification of a friend in Berlin.

Our clerical letter-writer came to England, as all travellers should do, by way of the Thames; and, gazing on the great river crowded with ships and boats, on the soft green hills on either side, the fertile cultivated land, the green corn-fields, with their borders of living hedges, owned to himself that the shores of the Thames surpassed the banks of the Elbe as spring surpasses autumn. To avoid the tedious passage up the river, he and five other passengers took a boat to the shore, and walked to Dartford, through 'a paradisaical region,' wondering as he walked how the incomparable road had been made so firm and solid. Upon reaching the town, he beheld, for the first time, an English soldier in his red uniform, with his hair cut short, and combed back so as to afford a full view of his fine, broad, manly face; and was further gratified by the 'true English sight' of two boys boxing in the street. Here Moritz and two of his companions hired a post-chaise to take them to town; 'three not paying more than one would do, an indulgence allowed by act of parliament;' and thanks to the rapid succession of interesting objects on the route, reached Greenwich in a state of semi-stupefaction. After leaving Greenwich, the road became still busier, busier than the most frequented street in Berlin, and he was not sorry when he desisted London, enveloped in a thick fog or smoke, with St Paul's rising like a huge mountain above the mass of buildings, to be amazed presently by the assemblage of contrasts and contraries visible from the magnificent bridge of Westminster—the majestic cathedral, the venerable abbey, the bridge of Blackfriars, the delightful terraces planted with trees, and 'those tasteful buildings called the Adelphi.'

Near these tasteful buildings the pastor found a home in the house of a tailor's widow, who, like Mrs Bardell, took in single gentlemen only. For sixteen shillings a week he became proprietor of two large rooms on the ground-floor, the front one furnished with mahogany tables, leather-covered chairs, carpets and mats. At first he dined at a cheap eating-house, getting a dinner of roast-meat and a salad for a shilling, and nearly half as much to the waiter. This not tallying with his notions of economy, he resolved to have all his meals at his lodgings, where, although it was June, a fire was a necessity. English cooking proved so little to his liking that he generally made but a poor dinner upon a piece of half-mashed or half-boiled meat, and cabbage-leaves boiled in plain water, and covered with a sauce of flour and water. 'This,' says he, as if fearing his friend's unbelief, 'I assure

you, is the usual method of dressing vegetables in England. English-made coffee he compared to so much brown water. Still he managed to live pretty well; the fine wheaten bread, excellent butter, capital Cheshire cheese, and incomparable pickled salmon, making amends for all shortcomings. The fashion of cutting bread-and-butter as thin as poppy-leaves was not to his taste; but another kind of bread-and-butter in association with tea pleased him mightily. 'You take one slice after the other, and hold it to the fire on a fork till the butter is melted, so that it penetrates a number of slices at once; this is called toast.' Another thing that gave him great satisfaction was the custom of sleeping without a feather-bed as covering; and when we have noted that his shoes were fetched every morning by a female shoebblack, to be cleaned, we have exhausted domestic details, and may get out of doors with him.

The streets of London hardly came up to our German's expectations, the houses appearing rather gloomy than handsome; but the way in which they were paved and lighted was something quite new to his experience. The pavements, so convenient and pleasant, upon which no wheel could trench, lighted with lamps so close together as to give the idea of a festive illumination, and excuse the error of the German prince who seriously believed the blaze of light had been ordered by the authorities in honour of his arrival. The tradesmen's signs, too, were another source of wonder. 'It has a strange appearance, especially in the Strand, where there is a constant succession of shop after shop; and where, not unfrequently, people of different trades inhabit the same house, to see the doors, or the tops of the windows, or boards expressly for the purpose, all written over from top to bottom with large painted letters. Every person, of every trade or occupation, who owns ever so small a portion of a house, makes a parade with a sign at his door; and there is hardly a cobbler whose name and profession may not be read in large golden letters by every one that passes.' The inscription oftenest seen was that of 'Dealer in foreign spirituous liquors;' the populace being so fond of brandy and gin, that in the No Popery riots more people were found dead near empty spirit-casks than were slain by the bullets of the soldiers.

Westminster Abbey and St Paul's were of course visited, the latter at a cost of a little more than a shilling in pence and halfpence. The cathedral impressed him by its immensity and bareness, but scarcely excited his admiration; while after scampering through the British Museum at the heels of a guide, all he remembered was, that he had seen a great many rooms, a great many glass cases, and a great many shelves. St James's Park was another disappointment, turning out to be nothing more than a semicircle formed of an alley of trees, inclosing a large green area and a marshy pond. The 'oft imitated, perhaps inimitable Vauxhall Gardens' pleased him better. Taking a boat from Westminster, Pastor Moritz landed at the little village of Vauxhall, paid his shilling, and entered the famous gardens; the high trees here and there, the long walks with paintings at their ends, making him fancy himself back in Berlin; a fancy strengthened by falling in with some Prussian gentlemen, among them being the secretary to the ambassador. The rotunda, with its immense mirrors, its great chandeliers, and its beautiful

illuminations; the statues of poets and philosophers; the walks, crowded with people of all ranks, delighted him exceedingly. Late in the evening, he was entertained by a curtain in the garden being suddenly drawn up, when, by some extraordinarily ingenious mechanism, the eye and ear were so deceived as actually to see and hear a natural waterfall descending from a high rock. He was not so much entertained while supping in a box with his new friends, by their conversation being continually interrupted by the irruption of certain ladies, who rushed in upon them in half-dozens and unblushingly demanded wine—a demand 'our gentlemen thought it either unwise, unkind, or unsafe to deny.'

At Ranelagh, the gay pastor had to pay half-a-crown for admission into a poor, mean-looking, ill-lighted garden, where few people were to be seen. Thinking he must have made a mistake, and hoping to find his way out of the unattractive place, he followed some people through a door, and found himself in a circular building illuminated by hundreds of lamps, the beauty and splendour of which surpassed all belief. 'Everything seemed to be round; above was a gallery divided into boxes, and in one part of it an organ with a beautiful choir, from which issued both instrumental and vocal music.' Underneath this were handsomely decorated refreshment boxes; the floor was covered with mats, and in the centre rose four tall black pillars, surrounded with tables covered with refreshments. Within the space marked out by the pillars, in a kind of magic rotunda, the *beau monde* of London moved perpetually round and round; French queues and bags contrasting with professional wigs and plain heads of hair; princes and dukes aired their dazzling stars; and as he contemplated the immense concourse of people, the far greater number of whom were strikingly handsome, he felt the same sensation as he felt in reading his first fairy tale. His musings were disturbed by the appearance of a waiter anxious to know what refreshment he would take: he was served in a moment, and learned, to his astonishment, that he might command anything more he desired without opening his purse, the admission-money covering all; Ranelagh was therefore not nearly so expensive as Vauxhall, where one who would sup could not escape under half a guinea.

These, we suppose, were the palmy days of the drama, when, Covent Garden and Drury Lane being closed for the summer, the playgoer had no choice but to go to the theatre in the Haymarket. The acting at the Little Theatre was, to Moritz's thinking, nothing extraordinary, although it was impossible not to be pleased with Edwin, who was obliged to sing himself hoarse only because it pleased the gods to roar out *encore*. The said gods were a noisy lot, calling out and knocking with their sticks till the curtain rose, quarrelling with the tenants of the two-shilling gallery between the acts, or amusing themselves by pelting the pit with orange-peel. In the boxes sat several servants, keeping the seats for the families they served, and sitting remarkably close and still; for if one dared to peep out of a box, he was immediately saluted with a shower of peel. The pittites were strangely lavish of applause, clapping a sentiment as unmeaning as it was short, if it happened to be pronounced with some little emphasis, or to contain some little point, some popular doctrine, a pathetic

stroke, or a turn of wit. A telling speech was not likely to be marred by bad delivery ninety years ago, since we are told that 'on the stage they pronounce the syllables and words extremely distinct, so that, at the theatre, you may always gain great instruction in English elocution and pronunciation.' We fear a foreign critic would hardly say as much nowadays.

Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and the Haymarket were well enough in their way, but nothing like so entertaining to the worthy German as the House of Commons. The first time he attempted to get into the Strangers' Gallery, he was stopped at the top of the stairs by a very genteel man in black, with the information that he could not be admitted unless introduced by a member. As he turned sullenly away, something was said about a bottle of wine; but the observation seemed so inappropriate, he did not believe it was intended for his ears, until his landlady told him he should have given the janitor half-a-crown or a couple of shillings for a bottle of wine. At three o'clock the next afternoon he was again in Westminster Hall, and, slipping the silver into the hands of the gentleman in black, was politely ushered to a capital seat, and found himself in a mean-looking building, not unlike a chapel, presided over by an old gentleman in an enormous wig. When the debate was in full swing, our observer was surprised to see some honourable gentlemen busy cracking nuts, some sucking oranges, some stretched at full length on the benches. Speaking appeared a very easy matter. 'All that is necessary is to stand up in your place, take off your hat, turn to the Speaker, and, while holding your hat in one hand, make with the other any motions you fancy necessary.' He was shocked to hear the rude things one member said to another, and to see the question in debate often lost altogether in personal bickerings. Some members conversing aloud while a tall, upright, elderly-looking man was addressing the house, the speaker paused to protest against treating such an old member as he was in so disrespectful a manner, and exclaimed: 'I will be heard!' This was Mr Burke. Soon the House rang with the laughter evoked by the wit of an excessively corpulent gentleman with a jolly rubicund face: this was Mr Rigby. But no speaking our German heard could compare with the fiery, persuasive eloquence of badly dressed, short, fat, swarthy Mr Fox; although he was astonished at the assurance of a man of such youthful appearance as Mr Pitt in standing up to speak, and still more astonished at the universal attention he commanded. 'He seems to me not more than one-and-twenty, yet this same Pitt is a minister, and even Chancellor of the Exchequer!' Here is a note anent parliamentary reporting: 'Two shorthand writers have sat sometimes not far distant from me, who, though rather by stealth, endeavour to take down the words of the speakers; and thus all that is very remarkable in what is said in parliament may generally be read in print the next day.'

One letter begins: 'Last Tuesday was hanging-day; there was also a parliamentary election. I could only see one of the two sights, and therefore naturally preferred the latter, while I only heard tolling at a distance the death-bell of the sacrifice to justice.' There being no opposition to the return of Sir C. Wray, the election, for a

Westminster election, was a very quiet affair. Still, it was exciting enough to one not to the manner born, to see the immense crowd assembled in front of the hustings, cheering the candidate, and rending the air with a shout of joy at a sight of their idol Fox. Then, as soon as the formal proceedings were over, 'the rampant spirit of a genuine English mob was exhibited in perfection. Scaffolding, benches, and chairs disappeared instant; the hustings were wrecked; the matting torn into long slips, with which the mob encircled hundreds of people, and dragged them in triumph through the streets. The spectacle delighted the sober observer. 'Depend upon it, my friend,' wrote he, 'when you see how, in this happy country, the lowest and meanest member of society thus unequivocally testifies the interest he takes in everything of a public nature; when you see how even women and children bear a part in the great concerns of their country; in short, how high and low, rich and poor, concur in declaring their feelings and their convictions, that a carter, a common tar, or a scavenger is still a man, nay, an Englishman, and, as such, has rights and privileges, defined and known, as well as his king or his king's minister—take my word for it, you will feel yourself very differently affected from what you are when staring at our soldiers in their exercises in Berlin.' It is something new to us to learn that nearly a century ago English national authors were read by all people; but our authority says: 'I have conversed with several people of the lower class, who all knew their national authors, and who all have read many, if not all of them. There is hardly any argument or dispute in conversation in the higher ranks, about which the lower cannot also converse and give their opinions.' The intelligence of the Londoners was only equalled by their cleanliness. Walking from Charing Cross to St Paul's, almost every one he met was good-looking, clean, and well dressed; not even a fellow with a wheelbarrow but wore a shirt, one, too, that had evidently been washed; nay, he did not see a beggar without a shirt, shoes, and stockings. As to the boys, he grows quite enthusiastic. 'What a contrast, when I figure to myself our petted, pale-faced Berlin boys at six years old, with a large bag, and all the parade of grown-up persons, nay, even with laced coats; and here I see nothing but fine, ruddy, slim, active boys, with their bosoms open, and their hair cut on the forehead, whilst behind, it flows naturally in ringlets. It is something uncommon to meet a young man, and more especially a boy, with a pale or sallow face, deformed features, or disproportioned limbs. With us, alas! the case is very much otherwise; if it were not, handsome people would hardly have struck me so very much as they do in this country.' Silent altogether regarding the ladies, he tells us that, in the morning, which did not end till four or five o'clock, gentlemen walked out 'in a frock and boots,' with their hair rolled up; but afterwards donned frocks of very dark blue, short white waistcoats, black breeches, and white silk stockings; their hair dressed and curled with irons, and half their backs covered with powder, only wanting bags and swords to be quite Frenchified. Officers were very rarely to be seen in uniform, and were only distinguishable by the cockade in their hats.

As one of the cloth, our worthy pastor was scan-

dalised at the free living of the London clergy, and records that one of them had lately fought a duel in Hyde Park and shot his man—the jury bringing in a verdict of manslaughter, and the judge sentencing him to be burned in the hand, 'if that may be called burning which is done with a cold iron; this being a privilege which the nobility and clergy enjoy above other murderers.' Foreigners enjoyed a privilege, too, that of not being pressed unless found in a suspicious place. He makes a strange statement relating to that method of supplying the fleet. 'A singular invention for this purpose of pressing is a ship placed on land not far from the Tower, furnished with masts and all the appurtenances of a ship. The persons attending this ship promise simple country folk who happen to be standing and staring at it, to shew it to them for a trifle; and as soon as they are in, they are secured as in a trap, and, according to circumstances, made sailors of or let go again.' Telling of a long and pleasant walk from the very village-like little town of Paddington to Islington, he ends: 'It is true it is dangerous to walk here alone, especially in the afternoon, in the evening, or at night; for it was only last week that a man was robbed and murdered on the very same road.'

Having seen all he cared to see in London, and panting literally for fresh fields, our traveller put together some clean linen, a book of roads, a map, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and with four guineas in his pocket, took coach for Richmond, fixed upon as the starting-point of a pedestrian tour. We do not intend to follow him from place to place; suffice it to state that he visited Stratford-on-Avon, Oxford, Birmingham, Lichfield, Burton—where the people standing at their doors hissed at him as he passed—Derby, Matlock, Nottingham, and Leicester. The scenery charmed him; the short miles, the milestones, the direction-posts won his thanks, and he was particularly struck by the novelty of being able to walk unchallenged through fine English towns, environed by no walls, barred by no gates, guarded by no soldiers, unvexed by demands for a passport, and untroubled by examiners of luggage. One thing, however, marred all the pleasantness of the journey—no one believed in walking gentlemen. Wherever he went, he found himself stared at, pointed at, at the best pitied, as a poor travelling creature. Had this been all, he might have borne it with equanimity, but the prejudice against a man who chose to use his own legs, rendered the obtaining a night's lodging a matter of difficulty. At Windsor he was allowed to sleep at an inn for one night only, but while they allowed him to pay like a gentleman, they treated him as if he were a beggar, and the waiter at parting gave him the heartiest malediction he had yet heard. As he travelled on, innkeeper after innkeeper denied him a bed, and although he persevered until he reached Leicester, he determined to return to London by coach. Accordingly, he took an outside place from Leicester to Northampton. It was the first time our pastor had ever travelled outside, and it was not long before he firmly resolved it should be the last. 'The getting up was at the risk of one's life; and when I was up, I was obliged to sit just at the corner of the coach, with nothing to hold by but a sort of little handle fastened on the side. I sat nearest the wheel, and the moment we set off, fancied I saw certain death awaiting me. The machine rolled

along with prodigious rapidity over the stones, and every moment we seemed to fly into the air. At last, as we were going up a hill, I crept from the top, and got snug in the basket. Easy and pleasant as we went up hill, I almost fell asleep among the trunks and packages; but the case was altered when we came to go down hill; all the trunks and parcels began to dance round and round, everything in the basket seemed to be alive and bent upon beating me. I thought my last hour was come. This he had to bear for nearly an hour, till the coach came to another hill, when he crept out of the basket a sorer and a wiser man.

Such was stage-coach travelling in England ninety years ago, when, the roads being bad, the jolting was frightful, and occasionally varied with an overturn and other by no means pleasant adventures, of which we have now but a faint conception.

HIS OWN EXECUTOR.

CHAPTER XIX.—PROCURING EVIDENCE.

By the time Porkington had finished his search at Peel's Coffee-house, it was well on into the afternoon; and it was necessary that he should finish the job he had in hand before the day was over. Delay could not help him, whilst a vigorous initiative might carry him over half his difficulties. This night, he must post a letter to Costicle and Costicle, giving them particulars of the date and place of his marriage.

It was necessary, then, that he should visit St Cuthbert's at once; but it was equally indispensable that he should disguise himself, so as not to be recognised by any of the officials of the church. It was possible enough that Costicle himself might be the guardian of the register. In that case, his task would be a difficult one. But his scheme was all the more likely to succeed for its boldness.

As to his disguise—fortunately, he had never given way to the modern practice of wearing a beard and moustache; his face was always smooth and clean shaven; a false beard and moustache would therefore effectually disguise his features. His thin, closely cut hair would easily bear upon it a wig. He could obtain these articles at some theatrical wardrobe-shop, where he could easily assign as a reason for his proposed disguise that he was organising private theatricals. He knew of such a shop in one of the dingy, shabby streets leading out of the Haymarket, and thither he made his way as quickly as possible.

He had no difficulty here; he was soon equipped with a beard and moustache that gave his face an appearance almost apostolic in its expression of fervour and earnestness. A broad-brimmed, high-crowned felt hat he bought at an adjoining shop, completed the upper part of his disguise; and a heavy cloak, with a velvet collar and tassels, which he hired from an old clothes-man, effectually concealed all his ordinary costume, whilst it was not out of character with the patriarchal appearance he had assumed. He took his properties back to his hotel, and then carefully dressed himself for

the part he had to play. A sharp penknife, and a bottle of ink, and another small bottle of water, to reduce the colour of the ink, if necessary, completed his equipment.

His heart beat somewhat fast as he, at about half-past five o'clock, knocked at the door of the sexton's house in St Cuthbert's Lane. He did not fail to realise that his enterprise was a perilous one; that it might bring him to the dock as a felon, but he accepted the alternative unshrinkingly; an old age of dishonoured poverty would be as bad a fate as death in a convict prison.

Sally opened the door.

'My dear,' said Porkington, 'I want the clerk—the person, whoever it is, who keeps the parish register.'

'Ah, that's the parish clerk,' said Sally, 'Mr Sinkall; you must go and ask him to come with you. He keeps the little newspaper shop round the corner.'

'My dear,' said Porkington, 'I am old and infirm; suppose that you let me sit down, and that you send a messenger for the parish clerk. I'll give him a shilling.'

'I'll run myself,' said Sally, having taken the shilling. Such small sums were perquisites of office she was not above receiving.

'Will you walk into the church, sir, and sit down whilst I am gone?'

Porkington followed Sally through the narrow passage and under the high stone arch into the church, and seated himself wearily on a bench. There was no histrionic talent required for this, for he really was faint and weary with unaccustomed toil. The moment, however, Sally had left him he started from the seat, and made his way to the vestry, the door of which opened from the south aisle of the church in a narrow stone archway. It was a comfortable room; a good fire was burning in the grate. In the corner hung a surplice and black silk gown. The centre of the room was occupied by a writing-table, on which were a blotting-pad and an inkstand. In a corner, in an arched recess in the wall, was a wooden cupboard of some size, having a stout oaken door, which was closed, but in the back of the cupboard hung a bunch of keys.

'Luck on my side!' cried Porkington, as he ran to the cupboard door and opened it. Yes, there were the registers all in a row—very neatly labelled with leather labels, printed in gold, Births, Marriages, Deaths, and with the several periods to which they referred marked outside in ink.

Porkington didn't hurry; he could not be interrupted except by some one coming through the church, the echo of whose footsteps on the sounding stone floor would give him ample warning. He took down the book leisurely, and turned, without undue haste, to the precise date of the entry he had noted from the newspaper; then he carefully scanned this entry, to see what it was he had to accomplish.

The register was of a pale blue paper, with water-marked lines running down and across it, and the entry ran thus:

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at time of Marriage.	Witnesses.
352	June 25	Raoul Parkinson Emma Bull	38 27	Bachelor Widow	Grocer —	Grove Street Biles Court	Charles Grice Mary Brown

Signature of Officiating Clergyman, A. P. LOUNDS.

Porkington almost gave up in despair. The amount of alteration the entry would require was far greater than he had bargained for. The names might be altered easily enough; but the age, and residences of the persons married, must be altered also. Well, he must trust to luck and a sharp pen-knife. After all, when he once started, he found it easy enough. A touch of the pen-knife here and there converted Raul into Procul; and a few fine pen-strokes turned Parkinson into Porkington; Bull was at once changed to Butt; thirty-eight to twenty-eight; twenty-seven to seventeen. Mr Lounds had written a loose, scratchy hand, quite different to that of the parson who had usually made the entries, a hand that facilitated Porkington's business wonderfully. Grocer was converted to Gentleman quickly enough; the address he left unaltered. 'I shall at once state that they were false addresses,' he said to himself. The witnesses might stand too—Charles Grice and Mary Brown were not likely to trouble him after all these years; and if it were necessary, he would have little difficulty in producing a Mary Brown to swear that she was the witness of the marriage.

All was going well. Once, indeed, whilst he bent over his task, all his energies absorbed in his work, he had a tremendous scare; he thought that the surplice was making a rapid dart towards him: his eyes were bent on the page, but he caught a kind of indirect gleam of white, which gave him the impression of a white figure coming rapidly forward. When he raised his eyes, however, he saw that it had been a mere delusion. The surplice was swinging gently to and fro, no doubt from a draught of air, and looked ghostly and weird enough in the failing light; but it hadn't moved from its peg. Now, he heard the north door of the church creak on its hinges. His task completed, he replaced the book carefully on its shelf, and made his way noiselessly along a strip of matting, up the south aisle.

When the parish clerk and Sally reached the nave of the church, they found the bearded old gentleman critically examining the font.

'Norman work this, isn't it?' he said, tapping the stone with his fingers.

'I'm sure I don't know, sir,' said the clerk; 'I haven't been in the parish long enough to know, sir. What did you please to want with me?'

'I am preparing a work on City churches, and the celebrated men who are connected with them. Now, I want to know how far back your register goes?'

'Not before 1694, sir,' said the man.

'Ah, that's a pity! I wanted to inspect the original entry of the birth of our great poet.'

'Ah, there's been a good many come for that, sir. I'm sorry I can't shew you, sir. But there's been a many celebrated men born hereabouts, sir. There's Sir Richard Walker, Baronet, who's been lord mayor twice running. I can shew you his register, sir.'

'I should like to see it very much,' said Porkington.

'Just you wait a minute, sir,' said the old clerk, 'while I go and see if there's anybody in the vestry.'

Sally gave a little pantomimic dance as the old man disappeared.

'He's lost his keys,' she whispered; 'he wouldn't tell me; but I know he's lost 'em; that's why he

kept me waiting so long. Nasty, cross, old thing! I'm so glad!'

The clerk appeared by the chancel rails and beckoned.

'All right, sir,' he said; 'there's no business going on. I've unlocked the registers for you, sir. Here's the late lord mayor's birth put down, sir.'

Porkington inspected the entry with becoming reverence. 'I'll make a note of this,' he said.

Then he gave the man half-a-crown, and left the church.

Porkington went to his hotel, and dined, and drank half a bottle of champagne. 'Here's to the health of the lord mayor!' he cried, as he took his first glass.

Then he sat down and wrote a letter to Costicle.

DEAR SIR—My marriage was a private one, and celebrated against the wishes of my friends; and to say the truth, although I know that it took place at one of the City churches, I cannot for the life of me recollect the name of it. The wedding was arranged by Charles Grice and Mary Brown, friends of my late wife, who were the sole witnesses. I have lost sight of them for some years, and believe them to be dead. I am ashamed to call back the remembrance of former follies, but I am obliged to confess that the marriage took place at a time when, in fact, I was not perfectly sober. I know the name of the officiating minister: it was a friend of my own—one Mr A. P. Lounds, who is also dead; and I recollect that in the corner of the church next the vestry there was a remarkable monument to a celebrated poet. I'm inclined to think, on searching my memory, that the church was dedicated to some rather out-of-the-way saint. It might be St Swithin, or St Chad; or was it St Cuthbert? At all events, a search in all the City churches for an entry on June 25, 18—, for the register of a marriage between Procul Porkington and Emma Butt could not fail to be successful. My memory has just helped me to another clue: the name of the regular vicar or incumbent was Webb. That I remember by a joke that my friend Lounds made on the occasion.

I know all this is frightfully unbusiness-like and careless on my part, but what can I say? It is my nature. 'You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.'

I'll call to-morrow, and see if you have made anything out of the maze.

Wm. Costicle, Esq.

CHAPTER XX.—A LAWYER'S DREAM.

William Costicle was at work late; the clerks had all gone, and his father too, and William was working by himself. It was rather a weird and gloomy place that to be working in late at night; for its window looked out upon the graveyard, and when there was any wind, sometimes, indeed, when there seemed to be none, the windows had a strange way of shaking violently, as though some one were outside and wanted to get in. There were noises, too, strange murmurs and whispers; and no wonder, for it would be hard to say how many generations of dead were lying under that green turf; surely it was no wonder that from these dumb souls, so utterly lost and swallowed up, so entirely effaced and forgotten from the world of living flesh—at night-time, and when everything

else was still—strange whispers should go up to the skies.

But William didn't care. If he could have heard anything to his advantage, he wouldn't have minded listening, but otherwise he was too busy to think about anything ghostly.

He finished his work at last, put away his papers, locked up all his drawers. Then he went to the safe, and took a look at the bonds; shut them up again, and locked the safe.

'It seems all right,' said William. 'I think we have him pretty tight; and I don't see how there is any flaw in the matter. Mr Porkington has put his foot into it nicely now, for all his cunning disguises. I have him on the hip. It's plain enough that Emma Butt was testator's mother, and that she's now Mrs Budgeon; and, of course, we shall have the money settled, so that all the fortune shall go to Sally. Of course, Sally will marry me. I've all along seen it would come to that. She was fond of Sam, I think, but she's getting over that. It will make a difference too, a wonderful difference, all this money. Why,' said William, 'it'll be a deal better for everybody than Mrs Baxter. Mrs Baxter, pooh! She had only ten thousand pounds.

'We'll buy an estate,' he went on, soliloquising, 'a nice estate, not too far from town: and we'll cut it up into building-lots, and I'll make all the conveyances. Oh, it's wonderful what can be done with money! I'll have offices in Lincoln's Inn, and I'll do twice as much work there as I do here. And I'll give dinner-parties too; I'll invite the judges and the masters in Chancery, and all the best lawyers of the day. Perhaps I'll go into parliament. I'd get up at six o'clock in the morning, and work up all my papers; and then by nine I'd be ready to drive down to the office, and there I'd stop till three; and then it would be time to go to the House for committees; and after that, there'll be a long sitting and a debate—ah, perhaps till one, or two, or three o'clock in the morning! Ah! wouldn't it be nice! And how nice it would be for Sally!'

William looked round, to see that everything was safe, and then turned the gas down—not quite out, but so that it only shewed a tiny blue tip of flame; then he opened a door—not the door leading to the staircase, but a door at the side—and descended a narrow newel staircase. In old times, it had belonged to a turret that flanked the chancel, and led up into the rood-loft, and to a little belfry where hung the sacring-bell. Now it led only from the lawyer's office to the vestry. William knew the way well enough, every step of it, and he didn't start when he opened the door and the great white surplice that was hung to it went floating out into the darkness like a spirit; he only struck a wax-match, and lit a candle. Then he sat down in the arm-chair by the blotting-pad and inkstand, and waited.

'I wonder when Sally's coming to lock up,' he said. 'I really think it's the nicest part of the whole day when she comes here to lock the door, and pretends to be frightened when she finds me. It was a very great institution that old staircase. The dear girl! I'll have it out with her to-night; she shall say Yes or No; but, of course, it will be Yes. I won't tell her of the fortune that's coming to her, for fear there should be any mistake. She'll be here directly.'

After a few moments, however, William became tired of waiting, and went out into the great dim church, whose clerestory windows seemed like lanterns hung up aloft in a dark vault. All was quiet there, and still. But as he reached the nave of the church, standing in front of the recess which marked the place of the suppressed chancel, he saw a faint light glowing through the lower part of the great east window. What could it be from? There was nothing there beyond the east window but a great blank wall. Whence that light, then? Could it be fire? Approaching more closely, he found that a gleam of light also streamed in between the wall and one of the golden tables of the Law there suspended. He touched this gently, and he found that it moved: it was hung from a pin in the centre, and it covered a hole let into the wall, probably for purposes of ventilation. And when he moved the table of the Law, he heard the murmur of voices coming from the space between the great east window and the blank wall; and the first word he heard fixed him to the spot: he stood with his head resting against the wooden tablet, his hands dug into the crevices of the wall. This is what he heard.

'And so, dear Sally, you really belong to me now.'

'So it seems, Mr' —

'No Mr, please—Henry, dear Henry.'

'Well, Henry, then; only, it seems so strange.'

'You'll have to get used to it, dear. Give me a kiss!'

William could listen no more, but sank down in a heap, resting on the cushion that was placed there for kneeling communicants, and lay there grovelling in the dust. Presently he crawled back into the vestry, put out the light, and went back up the winding staircase, and so out into his own office: there he sat for an hour or more prostrate and exhausted with his trouble.

He couldn't doubt now. She was false, certainly false! The voice was hers; he would have known it anywhere. Whose the other voice might be, he didn't know. What could it matter!

CHAPTER XXI.—A VILLAINOUS RESOLVE.

It was a happy belief of our pious grandmothers that everything happened for the best, and it is possible that, taking things in the general, there may be some ground for this pleasing faith. But in individual cases this is a sorry comfort. The toad lying under the harrow, and feeling the sharp fangs of the iron racking its every nerve, can find little consolation in the thought that the process of harrowing is a beneficial one on the whole, and that there may be occult virtues in its frame to be brought out in the progress of its torture.

It would be difficult to imagine a more cheerless, dismal party than that assembled in the drawing-room of No. 1 Costicle Grove. Orlando was in one of his casual fits of spleen, and was thinking grimly of his liabilities, and wondering how it would all end; Mrs Costicle was morose too, having had a blowing-up from her husband on the subject of the heavy expenses of the household, as if she could help it, when it was all the result of a wicked combination of everybody, including trades-unions and men on strike, to make everything dear and unpleasant, because people were not content with their stations in life, and wouldn't eat their

bread in thankfulness. And what was the use of drawing in now, just at a time when it was of such importance that Ellen should go into society and obtain a settlement in life? 'Penny wise and pound foolish, I call it,' said Mrs Costicle to herself; and then consoled herself by planning an evening party which was to cost nothing, seeing that the wine was already in the house, except for a few trifles of things from the confectioner's.

William's trouble we know of—heavy enough it was for him—a trouble that had no redeeming dignity of suffering about it, but was full of memories of shame and humiliation.

Ellen, too, was sorrowful; but she would hardly confess her sorrow to herself, but tried to brighten up the gloomy household. She played her father's favourite pieces, but he took no notice of them, and sat still gloomily huddled up in his easy-chair. She challenged William to a game of chess; but he refused sulkily; and then she tried to draw her mother into a discussion on the novel she was reading; but Mrs Costicle would have none of it.

So Ellen, repulsed on all sides, retired into a corner of the room, and with a work-table and a candle between herself and the rest of them, took up her embroidery, and tried to work. But the tears came welling up into her eyes, and turned her pattern into a misty web. She had been at work over this embroidery when Harry last came to see her. It was very sad; everything was sad and dreary.

'William,' said Mrs Costicle at length, breaking the silence, 'didn't I hear you say Mr Porkington had returned from Paris?'

'Yes, mother,' said William shortly.

'Then, suppose I ask him to come here to a little party? We really must give one soon, and it would go off with so much more *éclat* if we secured him. Only, these fashionable men are so much engaged; perhaps you'd better see him, and ask him what evening would suit. Quite among ourselves, so he needn't mind coming. It would cheer him up a little.'

'Pooh!' said William. But his mother had suggested to him an idea. It was a wicked idea; but for all that, in his present mood, it was not distasteful to him. Why shouldn't Porkington marry Ellen, and bring all this money into their family? Why should he trouble himself to defeat Porkington's schemes, for the sake of a girl who had been false to him? He had Porkington under his hand, why shouldn't he make use of him? He would take care that Ellen's future was secured. He would bargain for some advantage to himself—and he would be revenged on that girl. All that was wanted from him was to be passive, to accept Porkington's proofs, and then make his own terms. There might be a little difficulty with Ellen; but, after all, the prospect was an alluring one to an ambitious girl. Porkington was handsome and well preserved, and connected with the highest aristocracy. Oh! the scheme was perfectly feasible. It was villainous, but what of that?

What had honesty and integrity done for him, that he should make himself a martyr? What was the position of affairs here? His father, failing in health, straitened in means, his uncertain life the only stay of the household. His comfortable, good-natured mother, unfit as any baby to cope with the stern realities of life. His sister, nice engaging girl, good for embroidery and the do-

mestic virtues, worth perhaps thirty pounds a year as a governess. And himself practically a failure. He hadn't acknowledged it to himself as yet, but so it was. He was making no way; he was sacrificing himself to this wretched clerkship, losing his hold on the active work of his profession in the bare hope that a lot of City traders would take compassion on him, and place him in his father's shoes. And after all, some smug-faced slip of a boy, whose father was one of themselves, would beat him hollow. And he was to be disinterested, forsooth! Enact the virtuous young man in a comedy, hand over a fortune, and join the hands of his sweetheart and of her new lover—her Henry, forsooth! Not he.

Then the maid-servants filed in, and they all went to prayers.

THE LAVENDER-FIELDS OF HERTFORDSHIRE.

COMPARATIVELY few persons are aware to how large an extent the culture of lavender for commercial purposes is carried on within a radius of thirty miles from London. In the county of Surrey alone, there are nearly three hundred and fifty acres of land devoted to its growth; and the total extent of the lavender-fields in the London district cannot fall far short of five hundred acres. Although it is only of recent years that the culture of the plant in England has been sufficiently extensive to raise it to the dignity of a recognised industry, the dried flowers have been used from time immemorial as a perfume; indeed, it acquired the name given to it by the Romans, *lavandula*, from the use to which it was applied in scenting the water of the bath.

The lavender plant grows wild in some parts of Italy and the island of Sicily, but it is uncertain at what period it was introduced into England. Shakspeare, in the *Winter's Tale*, puts these words in the mouth of Perdita:

Here's flowers for you;

Hot lavender, mint, savory, marjoram;
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping: these are flowers
Of middle summer.

True, the scene is laid in Bohemia; but it is evident by the context that the plants named were such as were usually to be found in an English shepherd's garden as early as the time of Elizabeth.

Passing over the intervening three centuries, let us come at once to the subject of our sketch, the lavender-fields of Hertfordshire. An hour's journey by the Great Northern Railway, through a charming tract of country, past the historic houses of Hatfield and Knebworth, which lie hidden by trees on the traveller's right hand; over that grand engineering mistake, the Welwyn Viaduct, beneath which trickles the tiny river Mimram, through Stevenage, where Lucas the hermit, wrapped in his dirty blanket, still remains as when he served Charles Dickens as a model for his Tom Tiddler—passing all these, we at length find ourselves, as the train slackens its speed, at the bottom of what seems to be an extensive chalk-pit. This is the northern outcrop of the London

basin; and the station at which we alight as soon as the deep white cutting is passed, is Hitchin.

At this place, some fifty years ago, the experiment was first made by a Mr Perks of growing lavender, as a source of profit. So well did it succeed, that there are now about thirty-five acres of land in Hitchin devoted to its culture, yielding sufficient essential oil to produce upwards of two thousand gallons of lavender-water annually. A visit to the fields and laboratory, during the latter part of July or the beginning of August, when the flowers are in full bloom, is in itself worth the trouble of a journey to Hitchin; to say nothing of the special attractions which the neighbourhood offers to the botanist, geologist, and antiquary.

The largest field is situated at the western side of the quaint old town, near the house in which George Chapman, the friend of Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, completed his translation of Homer. The young plants are bedded out in November, at a uniform distance of one yard apart. Formerly, they were placed at only half that distance; but it is found that a heavier yield is produced from plants set a yard apart, than from double the number at only eighteen inches. When three years old, the plant is at its best; and when it reaches the age of seven years, it has made so much wood that it is more profitable to uproot it, and set a fresh plant. The harvest-time depends much on the state of the weather, but it usually commences about the first week in August. The flowers are cut with a sickle, bound up in small sheaves, and immediately carried to the distillery. There the stalks are cut off, leaving but little more than the flowers, by which the bouquet of the oil, afterwards extracted, is much improved, though the quantity of the oil is sensibly diminished. Much care is needed on the part of those who handle the sheaves in the distilling-house to guard against being stung by the bees which remain attached to the flowers. The temperance, industry, and providence of these insects are proverbial; yet their behaviour in lavender-fields, especially towards the end of the season, when the flowers are fully developed, cannot be too severely reprobated. So careless are they of the good reputation they have earned, that they refuse to leave their luscious feast even when it is laid on the trimming bench; and hundreds are thrown into the still, notwithstanding the efforts to dislodge them, in a state of helpless intoxication.

After the flowers are separated from the stalks, they are put in the still, which is a copper vessel holding about two hundred gallons, beneath which is a furnace. The flowers are pressed down tight, after which the still is filled with boiling water, and the head carefully fitted on and luted with clay or linseed meal, so as to prevent the escape of the steam. The head somewhat resembles an enormous tobacco-pipe, the bowl being placed over the still. The stem of the pipe, called the worm, is coiled round and round in a vessel of cold water known as the worm-tub. As the steam is driven off through the head of the still, it is condensed in passing through the worm-tub, and runs into a vessel beneath. The essential oil is brought away with the condensed steam, and floats on the top. A siphon sucks out the water beneath; and as, in its passage through the worm, it has become impregnated with the oil, it is utilised by being made hot, and again put into the still, to boil the next

batch. As the water in the worm-tub becomes heated by the steam-tube passing through it, cold water is injected from beneath, which forces off the upper portion of the water, which has become too hot to perform its task of condensation. In about four hours the still has given off all its steam, and the result is about a pint of essential oil, of a light yellow colour. In some seasons, it will fall far short of that quantity, while at other times it will greatly exceed it. When the condensed steam and oil have ceased to flow, the head of the still is hoisted off, the sodden mass of flowers is taken out with long forks, and the still is refilled. The refuse is taken back to the fields, and there allowed to remain, until it is used as manure for the next year's crop.

When the oil is first distilled, it has a peculiar empyreumatic odour; but by being kept in bottles for twelve months it loses much of its harshness. It is still, however, unfit to be used as a perfume in its natural state. In order to convert the essential oil into what is known as lavender-water, it is mixed with from twenty to forty times its bulk of spirit, and with just a trace of neroli, or other essential oil, according to the taste of the compounder.

Some idea of the enormous consumption of lavender-oil may be gained from the fact, that there is annually produced in England sufficient oil to produce nearly thirty thousand gallons of spirit of lavender. A large quantity is used in the production of other perfumes of more pretentious names. Soaps and toilet-washes are chiefly scented with French and Italian oil, which is worth but from eight to ten shillings a pound, while the English oil is valued at four times that price. The difference in the value is chiefly due to the fact, that in the foreign distilleries the whole of the stalks, and even the leaves, are put in the still, whereas in England, particularly at Hitchin, where even more care is taken than in the Surrey fields, nothing but the choicest blossoms are used.

THE WALL-FLOWER.

WHEN the eve-star uplifts her silver torch,
And in the twilight, wakeful bats flit by,
Pleasant it is, by open door or porch,
To meet the blossomed wall-flower's fragrant sigh:
As from green forest-boughs the summer shower
Sweeps fitful music, that vibrates and dies
In the same instant, so that cottage flower
Calls to my heart a thousand memories,
And back to olden times my spirit bears;
Shadowy reminiscences of spring—
The spring of childhood's half-forgotten years,
Like dew, round that familiar fragrance cling,
The hovering fragrance on the night-air cast,
Like a sigh breathed out from the speechless past.

On Saturday, September 6, will be commenced in this JOURNAL, a NOVEL, by the author of LADY FLAVIA, entitled

LADY LIVINGSTON'S LEGACY.

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